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JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

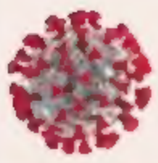
Nov 22 **63,98,165 doses**

Nov 23 **68,35,817 doses**

TOTAL DOSES 1,18,35,73,646

NATIONWIDE	NOV 22	NOV 23
Fresh cases	8,488	7,579
Recoveries	12,510	12,202
Deaths	249	236

KARNATAKA	NOV 22	NOV 23
Fresh cases	178	224
Recoveries	373	379
Deaths	2	5



W.H.O. WARNS OF 7 LAKH COVID DEATHS IN EUROPE BY SPRING

The World Health Organization's Europe office said its projections showed the 53-country region could top 2 mn Covid deaths in total

'VULNERABLE GROUPS NEED BOOSTER DOSE'

WHO Europe, based in Copenhagen, also cited the growing evidence of a decline in protection against infection through vaccines. It said a 'booster dose' should be given as a priority to the most vulnerable populations. This, however, is at variance with the Geneva-based parent organisation's position that boosters must be put off to free up jabs for poorer nations

DELTA VARIANT A BIG RISK TO THE REGION

- Three factors driving the increase are the highly transmissible delta variant of the virus, an easing of restrictive measures like requirements for mask-wearing and physical distancing in places, and large swaths of the European population that remain unvaccinated, WHO Europe said | **P16**

1.5 million

CUMULATIVE COVID DEATHS REPORTED IN THE REGION; 4,200 FATALITIES PER DAY

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26 new legislative proposals and 3 old ones lined up for the upcoming winter session of Lok Sabha

Bill to amend ST list in UP before polls

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

THE BJP's social engineering for the upcoming Uttar Pradesh elections appears to be taking shape, with the government listing a legislative proposal to amend the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) for the poll-bound state in the upcoming winter session of Parliament. A similar bill to amend the list of STs in Tripura, where the BJP is facing heat from the Trinamool Congress, is part of the proposed legislative business.

In all, 26 new bills and three others that had already been introduced, have been lined up for the forthcoming session. The bulletin released by the Lok Sabha on Tuesday also listed a bill to repeal the three contentious farm laws that were enacted by Parliament last year.

While Parliament had earlier this year amended the list of SCs in Tamil Nadu following a recommendation from the state government, a senior minister in the UP Cabinet said the state administration hasn't yet forwarded any such proposal. He, however, added that Parliament on its own can amend the list of STs in the state to address long pending demands of certain communities.

As for Tamil Nadu, Parliament had classified certain castes in the SC category ahead of the Assembly elections in the state.

While Sonabhadra and its adjoining districts of UP have tribal concentrations, there has been a growing demand for the inclusion of fisherfolk in the state in the list of STs. The fishermen community is electorally influential.

"The Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2021" seeks to amend the list of STs pertaining to UP. A parallel one for Tripura has been listed in the agenda of the official business for introduction, consideration and passing in the Lok Sabha.

The BJP's poll mantra in UP, incidentally, for the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections and the 2017 Assembly polls had been the consolidation of the non-Yadav other backward classes (OBCs), with focus on the most and extremely backward castes, which were previously supporting the BSP.

With the rival Samajwadi Party making attempts to stitch a larger pre-poll alliance with smaller parties that have distinct caste identities, the BJP is trying hard to play catch-up, knowing full well that multiple caste groups in UP have the numbers to change the electoral outcome.

Legal axe to fall on most private cryptocurrencies

ANURADHA SHUKLA @ New Delhi

THE Centre plans to bring a bill in the forthcoming winter session of Parliament to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in the country but with certain exceptions.

According to the Parliamentary bulletin detailing the legislative business for the Lok Sabha, the Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021 seeks to "create a facilitative framework for creation of the official digital currency to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India".

While the bill seeks to prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in the country, "it allows for certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses". Notably, the bill does not use the word 'ban'. According to sources, a 3-6 month exit period could be offered before preventing the trading, mining and issuing of cryptos so that existing investors have the opportunity to exit after declaring their investment for the purpose of taxation.

The Centre had planned to introduce the Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021 in Parliament in the past two sessions, but dropped it due to strong opposition from the Reserve Bank of India, investigative agencies and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which sought a complete ban on cryptos alleging such digital money is used to fund terrorism etc.

Currently, there is no regulation or ban on the use of cryptocurrencies in the country. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had held a meeting on cryptocurrencies with senior officials, dropping hints that strong regulatory steps would be taken to deal with the issue.

Indian Maritime Fisheries Bill

An Indian Maritime Fisheries Bill, which proposes sustainable development of fisheries in India's exclusive economic zones and responsible harnessing of fisheries in high seas has also been listed

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai during a visit to an apartment complex in Yelahanka, which was flooded after heavy rain, in Bengaluru on Tuesday | EXPRESS

PM assesses rain situation in state, assures CM of help

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday took stock of the situation in Karnataka, including Bengaluru, after heavy rain lashed the state over the last few days. He assured the state government of all assistance.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi today (Tuesday) called Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai to take stock of the situation due to heavy rain and floods in Karnataka. The chief minister explained the extent of loss of human lives, damage to crops and public property to the Prime Minister," the CM's Office stated.

The PM expressed his deep concern over the crop loss and loss of lives and assured the state of all necessary cooperation and assistance, the Chief Minister's Office stated.

Bommai on Tuesday visited several areas in Bengaluru that were flooded due to heavy rain. On Monday, he was in Kolar and Bengaluru Rural districts to get first-hand information about the damage caused to standing crops.

It is estimated that across the state, crops in over 5 lakh hectares of land have been damaged. The government has directed officials to immediately start the survey work to assess the damage and provide compensation without delay.

Another statement by the Chief Minister's Office said Union Home Minister Amit Shah too spoke to Bommai over phone to get information on the flood situation and relief works.

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'Need more compensation'

The Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission has asked the State to recommend to the Centre for an increase in crop loss compensation to at least ₹50,000 per hectare

INDIA, US TO OPEN UP STRATEGIC RESERVES TO BRING DOWN OIL PRICE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN a coordinated move led by the US, India will release about 5 million barrels of crude oil from its emergency stockpile to bring down the oil prices in the global market. According to sources, the stocks will be released over the next 7-10 days. "We are working on releasing stocks from our strategic reserves in coordination with other nations," said an official in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

A White House release earlier in the day said the US would release 50 million barrels of oil from its strategic reserve to bring down energy costs, in coordination with India, China, Japan, South Korea and the UK. The US Department of Energy will release the reserve in two ways — 32 million barrels in the next few months and 18 barrels as part of a sale of oil that Congress had previously authorised, the White House said.

Oil prices registered an all-time high in 2021, and according to US investment bank Goldman Sachs, it may hit $90 per barrel by the end of this year. India is the world's third-largest oil consumer and importing nation. It has a store of 5.33 million tonnes or about 38 million barrels of crude oil in underground caverns at three locations on the east and west coasts.

It includes 1.33 million tonnes of storage at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, 1.5 million tonnes at Mangaluru and 2.5 million tonnes at Padur (both in Karnataka). The stock, as per reports, will be sold to refineries of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, which are connected by pipeline to the strategic reserves.

1st EVER

This is the first time that India, which has 38 mn barrels of crude oil in underground caverns, is releasing its reserve stocks

Javed Akhtar with Mamata Banerjee | PTI

MAMATA EXPANDING FOOTPRINT

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee made some minor acquisitions during her latest trip to Delhi, inducting disgruntled elements from the Congress to expand the national footprint of her Trinamool Congress ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Sources said her party is in touch with leaders from across the Opposition | **P9**

NoBroker.com is India's first proptech unicorn

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

TECH-based real estate platform NoBroker.com has turned a unicorn after the latest $210 million in Series E funding, emerging as the first proptech unicorn in the country. With the latest round, which was led by General Atlantic, Tiger Global Management and Moore Strategic Ventures, NoBorker's total funding stands at $361 million, taking its valuation to $1.01 billion.

With its zero brokerage USP, NoBroker.com operates across various aspects of real estate transactions -- from rental or outright sale, to value-added services like home loans, packers and movers, legal documentation and online rent payment, among others.

Founded in 2013 by Akhil Gupta from IIT-Bombay, Amit Kumar Agarwal from IIT-Kanpur and IIM-Ahmedabad, and Saurabh Garg from IIT-Bombay and IIM-Ahmedabad, NoBroker.com currently operates in Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune. Over 75 lakh properties are already registered on the portal, with more than 1.6 crore individuals having used its services.

The latest funding round will help the company build its technology prowess and further invest in its home and financial services.

According to India Brand Equity Foundation, the country's real estate sector is expected to reach $1 trillion by 2030. By 2025 itself, it would contribute 13 per cent to the country's GDP. NoBroker.com wants to play a major role in this space.

"One of the uses of this fund-raise will be to invest in NoBrokerHood, our community app and marketplace. We have signed 10,000 societies till now and the objective would be to aggressively grow and reach 1 lakh societies in the next two years," said **Amit Agarwal**, who is also the CEO of NoBroker.com.

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